

## **John 11:35...Jesus wept**

***The shortest verse in the Bible...“But for all its grammatical simplicity, it’s packed with unfathomable complexity.”***

### **The Setting...**

**He was not surprised by what had happened**

**He was not frustrated that He had not arrived “in time”...He was not troubled by His ability to deal with this crisis...He had previously healed the Centurion’s servant (who was very near death) at a distance**

**Jesus had come to Bethany to raise Lazarus from the dead. He knew that in a few short minutes all this weeping would turn to astonished joy, and then tearful rejoicing, and then worship.**

**The Son of Man wept. Why? And what can we learn from the tears of Jesus?**

### **1. Humanity of Jesus...**

**Spurgeon...**In all things he was made like unto his brethren. “Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.” His humanity was our humanity to the full, although without sin. Sin is not essential to humanity: it is a disease of nature; it is not a feature found in humanity as it came from the Creator’s hand. The Man of men, in whom all true humanity is found in perfection, is Christ Jesus.

The fact that Jesus wept is a clear proof of this. He wept, for he had human friendships. Friendship is natural to man. Scarcely is he a man who never had a friend to love. Men in going through the world make many acquaintances, but out of these they have few special objects of esteem, whom they call friends. If they think to have many friends, they are, probably, misusing the name. All wise and good men have about them choice spirits, with whom their intercourse is more free, and in whom their trust is more confident than in all others. Jesus delighted to find retirement in the quiet home at Bethany; and we read that “Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.” Alas, my brethren! every friendship opens a fresh door for grief; for friends are no more immortal than ourselves. “Jesus wept” at the grave of his friend just as you and I have done, and must needs do again. Behold your Lord, like David weeping for his Jonathan, and see how human he is in his friendships.

“Jesus wept,” for he was truly human in his sympathies. He did not merely walk about among us, and look like a man, but at a thousand points he came into contact with us.

**It is essential that we grasp the remarkable fact that Jesus was (and is) fully Man as well fully God**

**As the Westminster Shorter Catechism puts it...**

Q 21. Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continues to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever.

**Why is this so important?**

**Bruce Ware (The Man Christ Jesus)...**Without fully grasping the implications of what it meant for Jesus to take on human flesh and become the God-Man..."We will belittle the magnitude of what Jesus has done if we fail to see the kind of obedience He rendered and the extent to which He was willing to go in ensuring he fulfilled the will of the Father."

**But I would also suggest that we may also miss the ways in which Jesus as "Immanuel" (God with us) shows us the heart of God in His day to day interactions with people...those who loved Him and whom He loved, and those who stood opposed to Him...and we may well miss the implications of how Jesus perfectly modeled the Good Shepherd...how He tangibly demonstrated the compassion of God in our very midst.**

**Jesus shows us in John 11 what He meant when He said...** "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

**When we meditate on the humanity of Jesus as the Perfect Man as well as Absolute God, we see how His earthly life completely fitted Him to be the Perfect High Priest...a High Priest who understands His people at the deepest level and perfectly sympathizes with them because He has been among them, and is well acquainted with their suffering.**

**NASB Hebrews 2:17,18...**<sup>7</sup>Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup>For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

**John's Gospel - Juxtaposes Humanity with Deity**

**Prologue vss 1-14...**

## **End of John's Gospel 20:30,31...**

**Powerful "I Am" statements, including the statement He made in Bethany that day...** "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die."

**Signs...attesting miracles...John 11 the dramatic climax and ultimately the sign which would catalyze the evil plot to murder Jesus**

**And yet, John records this poignant moment to show us a beautiful, moving account of His humanity juxtaposed with His miracle working deity**

*And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us*, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

**Spurgeon...**He was bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; and therefore "Jesus wept."

**Tears are part of humanity...the Scripture records numerous instances of weeping in the midst of personal loss**

**Here we see a facet of Jesus' humanity...every emotion he experienced and expressed was integral to His humanity...perfectly, sinlessly manifested but still expressed...unashamedly, and in the most perfectly "manly" fashion this world has ever seen or will see**

## **2. The sanctity of tears**

**"Sanctity"...blessedness, devoutness, godliness, piety holiness**

**BB Warfield...**

One of the greatest theologians of all time, B.B. Warfield wrote a book "The Person and Work of Christ". Chapter four is titled "The Emotional Life of Our Lord." Here's an excerpt...

"The emotion which we should naturally expect to find most frequently attributed to that of Jesus whose whole life was a mission of mercy, and whose ministry was so marked by deeds of beneficence that it was summed up in the memory of His followers as a going through the land doing good is no doubt compassion."

**In John 11, we see Compassion...perfectly, sinlessly displayed**

**The Scriptures endorse by example (eg Jesus in John 11 and 2 other passages in Scripture) and by instruction the shedding of tears**

**Instruction...exhortation...weep with those who weep Rom 12:15**

**You will not find in Jesus a stoic, detached, unfeeling disposition**

**Nor will you find in Jesus a man (and Jesus truly epitomized all that it means to be manly) embarrassed to show pain and express sorrow and recoil at the bitterness of sin and its wreckage in our lives and relationships**

**What you see is (as the King James so well puts it) our High Priest...**

touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Hebrews 4:15)

**Jesus shed real tears**

**Spurgeon...**His pure body and his sinless soul were originally constituted as ours are. When his body was formed according to that Scripture, "A body hast thou prepared me," that holy thing had in it the full apparatus of grief: the lachrymal gland was in his eye. Where there is no sin, one would say there should be no sorrow; but in the formation of that blessed body, all the arrangements for the expression of grief were as fully prepared as in the case of any one of us. His eyes were made to be fountains of tears, even as are ours.

**3. His love for Lazarus...And His love for Mary and Martha**

**By the way, John does something interesting here in his choice of words, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit...he uses two different words for love (cf John 21 in Jesus' post-resurrection restoration of Peter with the "Do you love me" interchange)**

<sup>3</sup> So the sisters sent *word* to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You *love* is sick." *Phileo*

<sup>5</sup> Now Jesus *loved* Martha and her sister and Lazarus. *Agape*

**Jesus loves Mary and Martha and Lazarus. Yes, He greatly, tenderly loved them...but at a much more profound level than they understood.**

**And when He wept, He wept at a much more profound level than everyone around Him**

**4. His anger at the carnage, the wreckage of sin**

**Spurgeon...**A great storm was stirring the mind of Jesus...."He was moved with indignation in the spirit, and troubled himself." What was this indignation? We cannot think that it was caused by *the unbelief of his friends*, or even by *the pretended sympathy of those malicious Jews who hurried to accuse him to the Pharisees*; but we look further and deeper for the reason for this heat. *He now stood*

***face-to-face with the last enemy, death. He saw what sin had done in destroying life, and even in corrupting the fair handiwork of God in the human body; he noted, also, the share which Satan had in all this, and his indignation was aroused; yes, his whole nature was stirred...Between indignation at the powers of evil, grief for the family who had been bereaved by death, sorrow over those who stood by in unbelief, and a distressing realisation of the effects of sin, the Lord's heart was evidently in a great storm.***

**John uses a distinctive word for Jesus in John 11:35...only 1x in NT Greek *dakruo*...essentially a synonym, but John has under the inspiration of the Spirit of God selected a different word**

**I can only surmise John is pointing us to the fact that Jesus wept in a way that was not immediately understood (note 11:36,37)**

**Jesus was indignant...for a couple of reasons**

**The ravages of sin**

**The hardness of some hearts, and the hopelessness of others**

“Our Lord was indignant that sin had brought such sorrow into this world and shed tears of love and compassion....His humanness is a great comfort to His people, for He is touched by our troubles, remembers His own experiences, and is able to help us as a sympathetic High Priest” Joel Beeke

**Ravages of sin...not the way it was supposed to be (Rom 5:12) cf Genesis 1... God saw that it was good (each day)**

**Note Gen 2:15-17**

**Rom 5:12**

**Curse...Gen 3**

**Genesis 5...constant refrain... “and he died” (vss 5,8,11,14,17,20,27,31) 8X in that chapter...the same mournful refrain**

**What can we learn from Jesus' tears? And how should we respond?**

**1. We are to look to Jesus for that time when faith becomes sight**

**Genesis 3 and the carnage of the Fall is not the end of the story...the seed of the woman has indeed crushed the head of the serpent but the day of consummation and restoration still awaits us**

**See Rev 21:3-5..**

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. <sup>2</sup>And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, <sup>4</sup>and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

**2. We are to take comfort that our Great High Priest knows us better than we know ourselves...**

**Psalm 139...**

139 O Lord, You have searched me and known *me*.  
<sup>2</sup>You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
You understand my thought from afar.  
<sup>3</sup>You scrutinize my path and my lying down,  
And are intimately acquainted with all my ways.  
<sup>4</sup>Even before there is a word on my tongue,  
Behold, O Lord, You know it all.

**And He takes note of every tear we shed...Psalm 56:8**

<sup>8</sup>You have taken account of my wanderings;  
Put my tears in Your bottle.  
Are *they* not in Your book?

**Jesus models for us weeping to identify with a mourning people (Matthew 11:28-30...gentle and lowly and acquainted with sorrow (Isa 53:3)**

**What else can we learn from Jesus' tears?**

**He recoils at the spoilage of the Enemy and the wreckage of sin, and**

**He is indignant toward the heart that says "Jesus could have stepped in and done something but He was unable or unwilling"**

**To those who would say Christ is unable...or unwilling**

**In the words of J B Phillips "Your God is too small"...in the words of Isaiah 7...if you will not believe you will not be established.**

**Spurgeon...God is too good to be unkind and He is too wise to be mistaken. And when we cannot trace His hand, we must trust His heart**

**3. We are to learn to trust in Jesus in the present when His timing differs from our hopes**

**What do we do when waiting is hard?**

**What do we do when we find ourselves in the gut wrenching angst of the David the Psalmist in Psalm 13...the “how long? Psalm”**

<sup>1</sup> How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?  
How long will you hide your face from me?  
<sup>2</sup> How long must I wrestle with my thoughts  
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?  
How long will my enemy triumph over me?

**The answer is found in David’s resolve...**

<sup>5</sup> But I trust in your unfailing love;  
my heart rejoices in your salvation.  
<sup>6</sup> I will sing the Lord’s praise,  
for he has been good to me.

**What do we do when waiting is hard and hope is fading fast? We wait. And we trust.**

**Because God is never late. And God never fails to do that which is absolutely for our good and His glory**

God never pursues His glory at the expense of the good of His people, nor does He ever seek our good at the expense of His glory. He has designed His eternal purpose so that His glory and our good are inextricably bound together. What comfort and encouragement this should be to us. If we are going to learn to trust God in adversity, we must believe that just as certainly as God will allow nothing to subvert His glory, so He will allow nothing to spoil the good He is working out in us and for us.

Jerry Bridges

**What else can we learn from Jesus’ tears?**

**4. We have a faithful High Priest in Heaven**

**When we find our selves in the stormy seas of sorrow, we turn in trust the One who stills the wind and waves**

**We can learn to turn to Jesus in times of loss**

***Here are seven words of encouragement from Spurgeon's pen:***

1. **God is good.** Spurgeon declared that it was his desire to “comfort some of my Master’s servants! I would say to them in their trials—My brethren, God is good.”
2. **God will not forsake you. Because God is good, he will never abandon his people.** Spurgeon encouraged his readers “that God will bear you through.”
3. **God awaits your prayers of faith.** “There is a promise prepared for your present emergencies; and if you will believe and plead it at the mercy-seat through Jesus Christ, you shall see the hand of God stretched out to help you.”
4. **God’s Word will not fail you.** “Everything else will fail, but his word never will.”
5. **God is supremely trustworthy.** Spurgeon offers a personal testimony: “He has been to me so faithful in countless instances that I must encourage you to trust him. I should be ungrateful to God and unkind to you if I did not do so.” He further said: “God is glorified when his servants trust him implicitly.”
6. **God’s power is necessary.** “I know that, without his divine power, all that I can say will be of no avail; but, under his quickening influence, even the humblest testimony will confirm feeble knees, and strengthen weak hands.”
7. **God is a loving heavenly Father.** “Our young ones ask no question about our will or our power, but having once received a promise from the Father, they rejoice in the prospect of its fulfillment, never doubting that it is as sure as the sun.” Spurgeon wanted his readers to “discover the duty and delight of such child-like trust in God” as they read *The Cheque Book of the Bank of Faith*

**When we cannot trace His hand, we must trust His heart**

**Puritan Thomas Goodwin...Jesus has the same heart in Heaven for His own that He had on earth**

**“The Heart of Christ in Heaven Toward Sinners on Earth” ...the beautiful heart of Jesus (in heaven as it was on earth)...intercedes for us as one who has suffered greatly and loves greatly**

**Because the heart of Christ in Heaven is the same as His heart on earth, and He calls upon us to come to Him as weak and weary sinners who desperately need His comfort and rest.**

**He calls us to...draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. And we do draw near with boldness and resolve because...we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tried in all things as *we are*, yet without sin.**



## **How else should we respond to Jesus' tears?**

**We not only rejoice with those who rejoice, we weep with those who weep.**

Our own experience of God's gracious comfort in affliction equips us for faithfully serving others...2 Corinthians 1

### **Jesus! What a Friend for sinners!**

#### **Verse 1**

Jesus! What a Friend for sinners!  
Jesus! Lover of my soul;  
Friends may fail me, foes assail me,  
He, my Savior, makes me whole.

#### **Chorus**

Hallelujah! What a Savior!  
Hallelujah! What a Friend!  
Saving, helping, keeping, loving,  
He is with me to the end.

#### **Verse 2**

Jesus! What a Strength in weakness!  
Let me hide myself in Him.  
Tempted, tried, and sometimes failing,  
He, my Strength, my victory wins.

#### **Verse 3**

Jesus! What a Help in sorrow!  
While the billows over me roll,  
Even when my heart is breaking,  
He, my Comfort, helps my soul.

#### **Verse 4**

Jesus! What a Guide and Keeper!  
While the tempest still is high,  
Storms about me, night overtakes me,  
He, my Pilot, hears my cry.

#### **Verse 5**

Jesus! I do now adore Him,  
More than all in Him I find.  
He hath granted me forgiveness,  
I am His, and He is mine.